Rail link between R.S. Pura and Poonch

597. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that people living in R.S. Pura and surrounding area have been demanding rail link between R.S. Pura and Poonch for the betterment of business activities and movement of local goods besides cheaper passenger transport;

(b) whether Government are considering to link R.S. Pura and Poonch by local rail;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, whether Government will consider this demand of the people of J&K?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No such demand has been received in the recent past.

(b) to (d) A survey for construction of new line between Jammu and Poonch *via* Akhnoor and Rajouri was conducted in March, 1999 and updated in November, 2000. As per survey report, the cost of construction of 223 kms. long line has been assessed as Rs. 4574 crore with rate of return as (-) 27.28%. Due to constraint of resources and heavy throwforward of the ongoing projects, it was not considered feasible to take up the work.

Earning of Railways

598. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways have earned Rs. 952 crores more than the budgetary provision for the first nine months of 2004-05;

(b) if so, the operating cost of the Railways during this period;

(c) the operating cost of the Railways during 2002-03 and 2003.-04;

(d) whether the Railways is likely to make profit during the current financial year; and

(e) if so, what is the estimated amount thereof?